with External Affairs Minister and Home Minister and was sensitised regarding India's concerns on terrorism.

(b) As reported in the Hindustan Times on 29 December 2002, Mr. Straw on 27 December 2001, made a statement on India-Pakistan relations expressing concern at the terrorist attack on our Parliament and calling for continued action by Pakistan on "terrorist groups operating from their territory". In an interview to BBC Radio 4 on 28 December, Mr. Straw also said that "you cannot go on turning a blind eye to terrorist activities by simply lebelling those terrorists Kashmiri freedom fighters".

(c) India has held talks with other key countries including the USA and Russia on this issue. US Secretary of State Colin Powell during his visit to India on 17-18 January 2002 had stressed that President Musharraf must match his words with action. Russian Foreign Minister Ivan Ivanov during his visit to India on 3-4 February 2002 had strongly condemned cross border terrorism and underlined the need for Pakistan to cooperate in stopping infiltration of terrorists into India.

Public relations war with Pakistan

1255. SHRI JIBON ROY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) Whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Indian losing public relations war to Pak" published in the Hindu dated 18th January, 2002;

(b) Government's perception thereto;

(c) the steps taken to improve intelligence of public sector and diplomatic work for arresting the alienation of public opinion abroad; and

(d) whether the army position taken after terrorist attack on Parliament has caused the waning of initial advantage in the diplomatic front?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) Government have seen the report appearing in the Hindu on 18th January 2002.

(b) to (d) Government have been, appropriately and effectively, bringing to the attention of the international community facts pertaining to Pakistan's sponsorship of cross border terrorism. The matter has been raised during high level interactions with several world leaders. Seven high level delegations comprising members from both Houses of Parliament, distinguished scholars and former diplomats also visited selected countries in Europe, West Asia, Gulf, South East Asia and Africa in the months of January and February this year. The international community now also openly acknowledges the fact that Pakistan has been sponsoring cross border terrorism. In its fight against terrorism India has also been cooperating with several countries at the operational and policy levels, including through Joint Working Groups on terrorism.

There is strong international support for India's determination to resist terrorism until it is decisively crushed. India has also received support for the diplomatic and other measures taken in this regard. The widespread consensus in the international community is that there is no justification for terrorism which must be eradicated wherever it exists.

Regulation at Madarsas in Nepal

1256. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) Whether the Nepal Government has taken a decision to regulate the functioning of madarsas along its borders with UP and Bihar;

(b) if so, whether such steps taken by the Nepal Government are posing threat to security of the country;

(c) whether the Nepal Government has been encouraging Islamic groups to set up more madarsas near UP and Bihar borders;

(d) if so, whether Government have taken up the issue with the Nepal Government; and